

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 *Suba¹⁷* 1. A stackable crate for holding and transporting products
 2 comprising:
 3 a side wall integrally formed with a bottom surface, the side wall
 4 formed so that at least a portion of an opening in the crate has a larger dimension
 5 than the bottom surface; and
 6 a drag rail formed on an underside portion of the bottom surface,
 7 wherein a portion of an inner surface of the side wall is formed to reduce the
 8 dimension of the crate opening in at least one selected area so as to provide a tighter
 9 fit with a drag rail of a crate stacked thereon.

1 2. The crate of claim 1 wherein the side wall is joined to another
 2 side wall to form a corner, and the at least one selected area comprises the corner.

1 3. The crate of claim 1 wherein the at least one selected area
 2 comprises an upper edge area of the side wall.

1 4. The crate of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of side
 2 walls formed as an open-top box having four corners, wherein the at least one
 3 selected area comprises an upper portion of each side wall at each corner.

1 5. The crate of claim 1 wherein the side wall tapers outwardly
 2 from a vertical plane as the side wall extends upwardly from the bottom surface to
 3 enlarge a top opening of the crate, and the at least one selected area comprises a
 4 portion of the inner surface of the side wall formed without taper.

1 6. The crate of claim 1 wherein the side wall tapers outwardly
 2 from a vertical plane as the side wall extends upwardly from the bottom surface to

3 enlarge a top opening of the crate, and the at least one selected area comprises a
4 portion of the inner surface of the side wall formed with reduced taper.

1 *102* 7. A crate for holding and transporting products comprising:
2 a side wall integrally formed with a bottom surface; and
3 a drag rail formed on an underside portion of the bottom surface,
4 wherein an inner surface of the side wall is formed to position at least a portion of
5 the side wall over the drag rail.

1 8. The crate of claim 7, wherein the inner side wall surface is
2 formed as a variable radius blend into the bottom surface sufficient to position a
3 portion of the side wall over the drag rail.

1 9. The crate of claim 7 wherein the side wall is joined to another
2 side wall to form a corner, and the inner side wall surface is contoured at a lower
3 surface of the corner so as to extend over the drag rail.

1 10. The crate of claim 7 wherein the inner side wall surface is
2 formed at a lower edge area proximate each vertically extending end of the side wall
3 with an inwardly extending taper.

1 11. The crate of claim 7 further comprising a plurality of side
2 walls formed as an open-top box having four corners, wherein a lower portion of
3 each side wall at the corner is formed to position a portion of each side wall over
4 the drag rail.

1 12. The crate of claim 7 wherein the side wall is integrally formed
2 with the bottom surface so that at least a portion of an opening in the crate has a
3 larger dimension than the bottom surface, and another portion of an inner surface
4 of the side wall is formed to reduce the dimension of the crate opening in at least

5 one selected area so as to provide a tighter fit with a drag rail of a crate stacked
6 thereon.

1 13. The crate of claim 12 wherein the side wall is joined to
2 another side wall to form a corner, and the at least one selected area comprises the
3 corner.

1 14. The crate of claim 12 wherein the at least one selected area
2 comprises an upper edge area of the side wall.

1 15. The crate of claim 12 further comprising a plurality of side
2 walls formed as an open-top box having four corners, wherein the at least one
3 selected area comprises an upper portion of each side wall at each corner.

1 16. A method of forming a stackable crate for holding and
2 transporting products comprising:

3 forming a side wall with a bottom surface so that at least a portion
4 of an opening in the crate has a larger dimension than the bottom surface;

5 forming a drag rail on an underside portion of the bottom surface;

6 and

7 contouring the inner surface of the side wall to reduce the dimension
8 of the crate opening in at least one selected area so as to provide a tighter fit with
9 a drag rail when a crate is stacked thereon.

1 17. The method of claim 16 wherein forming a side wall
2 comprises forming a pair of side walls joined together at a corner, and contouring
3 the inner surface of each side wall to reduce the dimension of the crate opening
4 proximate the corner.

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23. The method of claim 20 further comprising contouring the inner side wall surface with an inward taper at a lower edge area proximate each vertically extending end of the side wall.

- 1 24. The method of claim 20 wherein forming a side wall
2 comprises forming an open-top box having four corners, and contouring the inner
3 surface of each side wall at a lower portion of each corner to extend over the drag
 rail.

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